

East Altoona Freight Locomotive Terminal, Roundhouse
200 feet Northeast of Furnace Road Bridge
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-228-A

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3-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HAER
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7-ALTO,
3-A-

EAST ALTOONA FREIGHT LOCOMOTIVE TERMINAL, ROUNDHOUSE

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Location: 200 feet Northeast of Furnace Road Bridge, Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania

USGS Quad: Bellwood, Pennsylvania (1:24000)
UTM: 17 E.722620 N.4491846

Date of Construction: 1904

Builder: Pennsylvania Railroad

Present Owner: Conrail

Present Use: Abandoned

Significance: The Roundhouse was previously one of the largest classification yards in the region. Although the Roundhouse itself was demolished, the turntable remains in place.

Project Information: This project was undertaken by HAER in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project as part of an architectural survey covering a nine-county region in Southwestern Pennsylvania, Randall Cooley, Director. See HAER No. PA-108, Pennsylvania Railroad, Altoona Works, Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania for further project information and documentation.

Compiler: Peter Stott, Historian
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History:

The Pennsylvania Railroad built a vast classification yard and freight locomotive maintenance and repair facility at Blair's Furnace, now called East Altoona in 1904. Separate classification yards for eastbound and westbound traffic were placed outside of the Main Line freight tracks, while the passenger tracks were diverted to the western edge of the right-of-way. Train classification in each yard was assisted by the use of gravity humps (see Juniata Scales and Hump). The locomotive repair facility centered on the East Altoona Freight Locomotive Roundhouse, which had a 100' turntable at its core. This table served 50 stalls plus the entry and exit tracks. Four of the stalls had drop tables. After the heavy repairs had been completed the locomotives were transferred to the storage tracks. Other important features of the freight locomotive terminal were the inspection pits (75' in length), the ash pits (280' in length), the coal, sand and water wharves (located east of the roundhouse), a power plant, a machine shop, an oil house, a wash house, and an office and storehouse, part of which was used to accommodate crews which were required to layover at the terminal. Unfortunately almost all of these structures were demolished in the 1960s, including the giant Roundhouse. Interestingly, the rusting turntable of the Roundhouse remains in place.

Sources:

"The East Altoona Freight Terminal of the Pennsylvania Railroad," Railway Age 19 January 1906, pp 86-97

"East Altoona Freight Locomotive Terminal," American Engineer & Railroad Journal 80 (February 1906, March 1906
Serial in two parts, pp 46-52, 81-87

Hitt, Rodney. "East Altoona Engine Terminal of the Pennsylvania," Railroad Gazette 40 (16 March 1906), pp 259-270

Foreythe, William. "Journal of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers 32 (July 1910), pp. 1231-1240.